

VZCZCXRO7171
RR RUEHCHI RUEHDT RUEHHM RUEHNH
DE RUEHKL #0494/01 1640442
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 120442Z JUN 08
FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 1195
INFO RUCNASE/ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHINGTON DC
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 2541
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 2473
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 2557
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 1676
RUCPDO/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHINGTON DC

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 KUALA LUMPUR 000494

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

STATE FOR IO, OES/EGC, OES/IET AND EAP/MTS
DEPT OF COMMERCE FOR NOAA/BRENNAN/DUNNIGAN
BANGKOK FOR USAID/RDMA

E.O. 12598: N/A

TAGS: [EAID](#) [TPHY](#) [ECON](#) [PREL](#) [IOC](#)

SUBJECT: Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC)
Sub-Commission for the Western Pacific (WESTPAC)
Seventh Intergovernmental Session (WESTPAC VII)

SUMMARY

¶1. (U) At the Seventh Intergovernmental Session of the IOC Sub-Commission for the Western Pacific (WESTPAC-VII) in Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia, May 26-29, 2008, delegates adopted a revised Program Structure to bring the Sub-Commission in line with IOC priorities and IOC and UNESCO planning and budgeting cycles, established a new advisory group to advise the officers and member states on scientific and technical matters, and elected new officers. These are important steps toward revitalizing WESTPAC and set the stage for continued -- and expanded -- U.S. involvement. U.S. objectives for the meeting were met. WESTPAC VII was well attended, with over 85 delegates from 11 member states.

WESTPAC REVITALIZATION

¶2. (U) The Sub-Commission adopted a series of recommendations intended to revitalize IOC WESTPAC, including:

-- New Program Structure and Strategy. The new structure incorporates the IOC's High-Level Objectives as the framework for setting WESTPAC priorities.

-- Science Advisory Group. WESTPAC-VII approved the creation of an expert advisory group to provide scientific and technical advice to the Sub-Commission through the Chair.

-- New Project Proposals. WESTPAC VII adopted six new project proposals, using the new WESTPAC High Level Objectives.

-- Project Termination Guidelines. Until WESTPAC VII, no mechanism existed for terminating projects that were not viable. The new project termination guidelines set clear criteria for terminating WESTPAC endorsement of such projects.

-- Framework for a Regional Training and Research Center Network. A new framework to promote training and research in the region was adopted.

-- New Sessional Meeting Schedule. WESTPAC VII agreed to adopt a two year meeting cycle and schedule that would allow its recommendations to feed into the IOC and UNESCO planning and budgeting process.

These actions are important necessary -- but not sufficient -- steps toward making WESTPAC a relevant contributor to the important ocean and coastal science and management challenges in the region.

ELECTION OF NEW OFFICERS

¶3. (U) The Sub-Commission elected Dr. Zhang Zhanhai, Director General, Department of International Cooperation, State Oceanic Administration of China as Chair; Dr. Yasuwo Fukuyo, Professor, Asian Natural Environmental Science Center, University of Tokyo as First Vice-Chair; and Dr. Nor Aieni Haji Mokhtar, Secretary of National Oceanography Directorate, Ministry of Science, Technology, and Innovation, Malaysia as Second Vice-Chair.

U.S. ROLE IN WESTPAC-VII

¶4. (U) Appreciation for the U.S. presence at WESTPAC VII was expressed formally in plenary and privately many times during WESTPAC VII; the U.S. was invited to serve as Rapporteur of the Session and as chair of the recommendations committee. Working closely with Australia, Japan, and the Secretariat in particular, the USDEL was able to intervene constructively and to exercise appropriate influence over the final recommendations. The objectives described in the U.S. position paper were met. The U.S. delegation was led by David McKinnie, NOAA. Adam Stein, Russell Jackson, and Jessie Huart, NOAA also participated as members of the U.S. delegation.

ENGAGING WESTPAC IN THE FUTURE

KUALA LUMP 00000494 002 OF 002

¶5. (SBU) The U.S. can play a strong supporting role in WESTPAC even without new project investments. Phasing in U.S. engagement benefits WESTPAC by giving it more credibility and new relationships are likely to strengthen existing US activities. Examples of appropriate U.S. engagement include:

-- Serve as a guiding and stabilizing force as WESTPAC matures during the revitalization;

-- Organize relevant existing bilateral and multilateral activities under the WESTPAC rubric to show strong support for the Sub-Commission at little or no additional cost or effort;

-- New small-scale activities, especially training and workshops, could be offered through WESTAC using existing funds; and,

-- Help link WESTPAC activities and projects to other appropriate organizations or efforts.

The USDEL will prepare a separate document for technical agency consideration that describes possible implementation approaches for these opportunities.

COMMENT: OUTSTANDING ISSUES

¶6. (SBU) Notwithstanding WESTPAC VII's accomplishments, there is much that remains to be done and concerns that remain. The USDEL's impression is that many WESTPAC member delegates, including the new officers, are not familiar with the UNESCO/IOC process. The USDEL was unable to persuade the Session of the value of adhering verbatim to the IOC High-Level Objectives, for example, or the importance of approving only projects that fall within the WESTPAC mandate. As a result, some WESTPAC actions are likely to be questioned at the Executive Council meeting in June.

SEVENTH IOC/WESTPAC SCIENTIFIC SYMPOSIUM

¶7. (U) The Seventh IOC/WESTPAC Scientific Symposium was organized

prior to the Session in Sabah, Malaysia, 21-25 May 2008. The Symposium registered a total of 367 participants from 19 countries out of 20 IOC member states in the region, with 113 oral presentation, 120 posters and 20 booths of exhibition presented by national agencies, NGOs, industries, research and education institutions.

KEITH